

Opening Statement of Dr. Fiona Hill
to the House of Representatives
Permanent Select Committee on Intelligence

November 21, 2019

Mr. Chairman, Ranking Member Nunes, and members of the Committee. Thank you for inviting me to testify before you today. I have a short opening statement.

I appreciate the importance of the Congress's impeachment inquiry.

I am appearing today as a fact witness, as I did during my deposition on October 14th, in order to answer your questions about what I saw, what I did, what I knew, and what I know with regard to the subjects of your inquiry. I believe that those who have information that the Congress deems relevant have a legal and moral obligation to provide it.

I take great pride in the fact that I am a *nonpartisan* foreign policy expert, who has served under three different Republican and Democratic presidents. I have no interest in advancing the outcome of your inquiry in any particular direction, except toward the truth.

I will not provide a long narrative statement, because I believe that the interest of Congress and the American people is best served by allowing you to ask me your questions. I am happy to expand upon my October 14th deposition testimony in response to your questions today.

But before I do so, I would like to communicate two things.

First, I'd like to share a bit about who I am. I am an American by choice, having become a citizen in 2002. I was born in the northeast of England, in the same region George Washington's ancestors came from. Both the region and my family have deep ties to the United States.

My paternal grandfather fought through World War I in the Royal Field Artillery, surviving being shot, shelled, and gassed before American troops intervened to end the war in 1918.

During the Second World War, other members of my family fought to defend the free world from fascism alongside American soldiers, sailors, and airmen.

The men in my father's family were coalminers whose families always struggled with poverty.

When my father, Alfred, was 14, he joined his father, brother, uncles and cousins in the coal mines to help put food on the table.

When the last of the local mines closed in the 1960s, my father wanted to emigrate to the United States to work in the coal mines in West Virginia, or in Pennsylvania. But his mother, my grandmother, had been crippled from hard labor. My father couldn't leave, so he stayed in northern England until he died in 2012. My mother still lives in my hometown today.

While his dream of emigrating to America was thwarted, my father loved America, its culture, its history and its role as a beacon of hope in the world. He always wanted someone in the family to make it to the United States.

I began my University studies in 1984, and in 1987 I won a place on an academic exchange to the Soviet Union. I was there for the signing of the Intermediate Nuclear Forces (INF) Treaty, and when President Ronald Reagan met Soviet leader Mikhail Gorbachev in Moscow. This was a turning point for me. An American professor who I met there told me about graduate student scholarships to the United States, and the very next year, thanks to his advice, I arrived in America to start my advanced studies at Harvard.

Years later, I can say with confidence that this country has offered for me opportunities I never would have had in England. I grew up poor with a very distinctive working-class accent. In England in the 1980s and 1990s, this would have impeded my professional advancement.

This background has *never* set me back in America. For the better part of three decades, I have built a career as a nonpartisan, nonpolitical national security professional focusing on Europe and Eurasia and especially the former Soviet Union.

I have served our country under three presidents: in my most recent capacity under President Trump, as well as in my former position of National Intelligence Officer for Russia and Eurasia under Presidents George W. Bush and Barack Obama. In that role, I was the Intelligence Community's senior expert on Russia and the former Soviet republics, including Ukraine.

It was because of my background and experience that I was asked to join the National Security Council in 2017. At the NSC, Russia was a part of my portfolio, but I was also responsible for coordinating U.S. policy for all of Western Europe, all of Eastern Europe (including Ukraine) and Turkey, along with NATO and the European Union. I was hired initially by General Michael

Flynn, K.T. McFarland, and General Keith Kellogg, but then started work in April 2017 when General McMaster was the National Security Advisor.

I—and they—thought I could help them with President Trump’s stated goal of improving relations with Russia, while still implementing policies designed to deter Russian conduct that threatens the United States, including the unprecedented and successful Russian operation to interfere in the 2016 presidential election.

This relates to the second thing I want to communicate.

Based on questions and statements I have heard, some of you on this committee appear to believe that Russia and its security services did not conduct a campaign against our country—and that perhaps, somehow, for some reason, Ukraine did. This is a fictional narrative that has been perpetrated and propagated by the Russian security services themselves.

The unfortunate truth is that Russia was the foreign power that systematically attacked our democratic institutions in 2016. This is the public conclusion of our intelligence agencies, confirmed in bipartisan Congressional reports. It is beyond dispute, even if some of the underlying details must remain classified.

The impact of the successful 2016 Russian campaign remains evident today. Our nation is being torn apart. Truth is questioned. Our highly professional and expert career foreign service is being undermined.

U.S. support for Ukraine—which continues to face armed Russian aggression—has been politicized.

The Russian government's goal is to weaken our country—to diminish America's global role and to neutralize a perceived U.S. threat to Russian interests. President Putin and the Russian security services aim to counter U.S. foreign policy objectives in Europe, including in Ukraine, where Moscow wishes to reassert political and economic dominance.

I say this not as an alarmist, but as a realist. I do not think long-term conflict with Russia is either desirable or inevitable. I continue to believe that we need to seek ways of stabilizing our relationship with Moscow even as we counter their efforts to harm us. Right now, Russia's security services and their proxies have geared up to repeat their interference in the 2020 election. We are running out of time to stop them. In the course of this investigation, I would ask that you please not promote politically driven falsehoods that so clearly advance Russian interests.

As Republicans and Democrats have agreed for decades, Ukraine is a valued partner of the United States, and it plays an important role in our national security. And as I told this Committee last month, I refuse to be part of an effort to legitimize an alternate narrative that the Ukrainian government is a U.S. adversary, and that Ukraine—not Russia—attacked us in 2016.

These fictions are harmful even if they are deployed for purely domestic political purposes. President Putin and the Russian security services operate like a Super PAC. They deploy millions of dollars to weaponize our own political opposition research and false narratives. When we are consumed by partisan rancor, we cannot combat these external forces as they seek to divide us against each another, degrade our institutions, and destroy the faith of the American people in our democracy.

I respect the work that this Congress does in carrying out its constitutional responsibilities, including in this inquiry, and I am here to help you to the best of my ability. If the President, or anyone else, impedes or subverts the national security of the United States in order to further domestic political or personal interests, that is more than worthy of your attention. But we must not let domestic

politics stop us from defending ourselves against the *foreign* powers who truly wish us harm.

I am ready to answer your questions.